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ABSTRACT

This bibliographic essay and research review investigates four areas: (1) the characteristics of elementary writing instruction prior to the 80s; (2) the factors which changed writing instruction in the 80s; (3) the characteristics of elementary writing instruction in the 80s: and (4) the place of elementary and pre/in-service textbooks in the teaching of writing. The essay concludes that writing process theory has been practiced across the curriculum in whole language or integrated learning classrooms, and suggests that writers, practitioners, and researchers study their evolution, reflect, and share their reflections. (One table of data and an appendix on textbook guidelines are included; 50 references are attached.) (Author/PRA)

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"Trends in Elementary Writing Instruction in the 1980s"

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Abstract

"Trends in Elementary Writing Instruction in the 1980s"

This bibliographic essay investigates four areas: the characteristics of elementary writing instruction prior to the 80s, the factors which changed writing instruction in the 80s, the characteristics of elementary writing instruction in the 80s and the place of elementary and pre/in-service textbooks in the teaching of writing.

I wish to extend my appreciation to Professor Patricia Sullivan, University of New Hampshire, for her help and encouragement throughout this project.

Trends in Elementary Writing Instruction in the 1980s

It seems to be an inherent part of the human condition at the beginning of a new decade to want to look back, reflect and perhaps hope to benefit from hindsight as we sift through events and analyze trends we recognize.

Elementary writing teachers have had the fortuitous distinction of witnessing and/or being a participant in what Temple and Gillet (1989), authors of a pre/in-service language arts textbook, call

> a renaissance. Writing is being afforded its proper place in the language arts curriculum, right up there with reading which has long dominated. Children at every grade level are writing every day for longer periods of time, taking charge of their own writing, and teachers are finally receiving guidance in how to establish and direct writing programs. And where this is happening, children are becoming effective, skilled and enthusiastic writers.(257)

This look at the literature describing the trends in elementary writing instruction in the 1980s begins with an essay by Lou LaBrant, first published in Language Arts in 1953 and reprinted in 1983, and a study by Barbara Donsky (1983) of trends in elementary writing instruction from 1900-1959, published in the December 1984 issue of Language Arts.

LaBrant begins with what has become a familiar analysis of a familiar problem:

> It ought to be unnecessary to say that writing is learned by writing; unfortunately there is need.

> Again and again teachers or schools are accused of failing to teach students to write decent English, and again and again investigations show that students have been taught about punctuation, the function of a paragraph, parts of speech, selection of "vivid" words, spelling-the students have done everything but the writing of many complete papers. Again and again college freshmen report that never in either high school or grammar school have they been asked to select a topic for writing, and write their own ideas about that subject. Some have been given topics for writing; others have been asked to summarize what someone else has said; numbers have been given work on revising sentences, filling in blanks, punctuating sentences, and analyzing what others have written.

LaBrant goes on to describe the "amazingly small" but "fortunate group who have written consistently, week after week" and states that "(w)e ought to know by this time that the way to develop any ability is through consistent practice." (72) After advocating topic choice as a way to get students to write what they know about and peer conferencing as a way of encouraging revision, LaBrant extends this advice to teachers: "Finally, do a little writing yourself. Try a professional article for one of the journals. Secretly try out your hand at a review of a new book. See what you could do with one of the topics your students find useful." (73)

It is understandable if the Yogism "deja vu all over again" comes to mind while reading LaBrant. We could say that little we were trying to do in the 1980s was really new. And this is precisely what Donsky concluded in her examination of nine representative elementary English language textbook series used in American classrooms between 1900 and 1959. As each decade's

textbooks are described, certain words rise to meet and connect with an 80's view of reading and writing instruction. But others fall short of the mark:

> During the first decade, textbook authors. . .strove to effect a literary atmosphere in hopes of fostering an appreciation by students of 'noble' literature. . .(6) By the 1920s. . .one result of the earlier emphasis on oral language was a tendency for many teachers to teach without benefit of text, plunging many classrooms into a 'semi-grammarless' age. . . By the 1930s teachers' manuals and student workbooks were published in conjunction with textbooks. Lessons were interdisciplinary. . .and indications of activity-centered, project-oriented curricula were much in evidence. Socialized revision of composition involving peer teaching was much in favor; students, not teachers, were responsible for holding conferences with the writer and for questioning, evaluating, and judging the work." (7)

A frequently quoted portion of Donsky's study has to do with a connection made between technological and educational ideas. Citing inventions (the telephone-1876, the radio-1895, the television-1920 , the computer-1930), She states: "Interestingly enough, there appeared to be a culturally determined, fifty year gap between the inception of a technological product and its accession by substantial numbers of American households. Likewise, educational ideas also took fifty years to gain acceptance." (9) Donsky's examination of nine sets of language textbooks spanning sixty years leads her to conclude:

> Concepts regarding the symbiotic relationship between reading and writing, the possibility of teaching reading through writing, and the importance of revision, originated not with Graves (1983), but with Baker and Thorndike (1912), nearly seventy years ago. Writing as a 'process',

> one involving prewriting activities such as the maintenance of personal logs or journals, was central to the textbook series by Burleson, Burleson, and Cash (1952), which even included caveats to the effect that writing was an on-going process, one that might necessitate a given piece being completed over a period of weeks.(11)

Donsky dismisses process versus product "controversy" as "little more than a chimera of the 1980s. In truth, good teachers have always been interested in process, that is, in the growth of the writer/reader - speaker/listener, otherwise known as students; they attended to the product insofar as it provided a measure of anticipated growth."(11)

This "same as" appraisal of the dominant trend in elementary writing instruction in the 1980s can be viewed as an attempt to avoid a deeper understanding of a new belief system by turning it into something familiar, then dismissing it. The strong image of the chimera represents the writing process movement as an imaginary mythical, fire-breathing monster. A more useful conception would be to think of writing instruction as a palimpsest, a parchment that has been written upon several times over many years as each theorist and practitioner scraps away the old to add some new knowledge. As with a palimpsest, much ofthe earlier imperfectly erased writing is still visible. And valuable.

Four interrelated questions form the focus of this investigation of the trends in elementary writing instruction in the 1980s:

What were the characteristics of elementary writing

instruction prior to the 80s?

What factors changed the way writing was taught in the 1980s?

What characterized elementary writing instruction in the 1980s?

What is the place of elementary and pre/in-service textbooks in the teaching of writing?

WHAT WERE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ELEMENTARY WRITING INSTRUCTION PRIOR TO THE 80S?

In 1980, Language Arts editors asked Donald Murray to project his hopes for the 1980s relative to issues and problems to be studied and solved. Murray said:

> There were. . . signs in the seventies that we may be starting to correct the destructive imbalance between reading research and writing research and instruction. The dominance of reading over the other language arts, the emphasis of receptive skills over creative skills has hampered research, teaching, and learning. The emphasis on reading is one of the principal reasons writing is not taught and not learned in our schools. Ironically, the focus on reading to the exclusion of writing has limited reading researchers and teachers, for little work has been done to study the complex reading process which is inherent in writing. You can read without writing, but you can not write without reading." [Almy and Others, 1980 (490)]

Dorothy Grant Hennings expresses a similar view in her pre/in-service text: "In the past, some educators have viewed reading and writing as opposite and distinctive processes; they have defined reading as receiving meaning and writing as expressing meaning."(16) She describes two approaches that have

not worked to teach writing: the teaching of grammar to improve writing and "frequently assigning topics and then correcting student errors. . .intensive correction of errors [by the teacher] is futile."(296)

In their book on whole language, Gary Manning and others (1990) give us a view of elementary writing instruction:

> . . .it was primarily 'creative' writing consisting of teacher assigned topics or sentence starters. Usually it took place only once a week; Friday seemed to be the most popular day for this assignment. Grammar, punctuation and spelling were taught as separate entities in the belief that they would help students become better writers. Teachers used their trusty red pencils to show how much they knew that their students did not know about language.(33)

In her essay on introducing the writing process, Ruth Beeker (1981) gives us several snapshots of a typical classroom from the past:

> For years, elementary school teachers knew how to teach writing. They wrote a story starter on the chalkboard and told the class they had thirty minutes to complete the composition. If the students finished early, they proofread their writing. Papers were collected to be graded by the teacher. When the papers were returned to the students, they were either 'taken home' (a euphemism for thrown away) or recopied. A language arts methods course could be evaluated by the length of the list of story starters the instructor had provided; a good writing in-service session provided novel topics to add to that list. New teachers had few apprehensions about teaching writing; they had experienced it all themselves as students.(3)

Kenneth Hoskisson and Gail E. Tompkins (1987) add similar twenty year old pictures to the collection in their pre/in-service

textbook in which they focus on what was often called creative writing time when a single draft was produced by students in a thirty minute period. There was "either no emphasis on mechanical skills or the requirement that the composition be error free. . .This traditional approach has emphasized the finished product, not what students did while they were writing. Students practiced writing; they did not learn to write."(163)

In his essay synthesizing research on the teaching of writing, George Hillocks (1987) cites several studies that indicate "the inadequacy of current school practices" (74) and focuses on the issue of time (or lack of it) given to writing instruction. Hillocks describes a 1981 study by A.N. Applebee which found "the average preparation for writing amounts to about three minutes" (74) and a 1975 study by James Britton and his research team which "found that most student writing is produced only for teachers to report what information has been learned."(75)

In an article detailing increasing support for elementary school writing instruction, Robert A. Shaw (1985) takes a look at the lack of priority given to it in the past:

> The (curricular) guidelines in many districts specified the amount of time to be spent each week in reading, mathematics, physical education, and other subjects, but none specifically allocated any time to writing instruction; it was to be done in time left over from other subjects.(17)

Prior to the 1980s, writing instruction was the neglected and misunderstood curricular poor relation [Graves, (1984), (92)]. Researchers knew approaches such as the teaching of grammar did

not work to improve writing [Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer, (1963), (37,38)]. Practitioners felt the ineffectiveness of hours spent correcting compositions as they watched students' eyes dart to that section of the page which showed their grades.

WHAT FACTORS CHANGED THE WAY WRITING WAS TAUGHT IN THE 1980s?

The 1970s and 1980s gave interested teachers rich opportunities to learn about writing instruction. Existing schemata about writing instruction were modified by new information about young writers. We adapted our way of thinking as we looked at people instead of paper and the producer as well as the product. But how did the research theory find its way into American classrooms?

In a study designed to find out parent perceptions of a whole language kindergarten program, Beverly Bruneau (1989) discusses why she and other teachers chose to explore and implement a new system of beliefs:

> Dissatisfied with the highly structured, analytic, and abstract approaches to literacy education found in the traditional basal approach, many teachers have opted for a less structured and holistic whole language orientation. . .where the role of the teacher consists of creating stimulating learning environments, providing relevant materials, and being a source of encouragement and support for young readers and writers.(3)

Administrative support is cited as a factor in promoting interest in implementing the writing process.(Feick, 1989), (Robbins, 1990). Patricia Robbins, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, describes the steps taken in the ConVal School

District in New Hampshire:

> Administrators supported these early risk-takers by budgeting for trade books and instructional materials. They provided time for teachers to work together, to share their ideas with other teachers, to attend workshops, and to visit others schools that practice writing process and a whole language philosophy. . .ConVal uses a teacher-consultant model to provide support and inservice training to teachers. . .Just as teachers identify the strengths of individual children in order to create successful reading and writing experiences, the consultants work with the strengths of individual teachers to create successful teaching experiences.(52)

Sharon Crowley (1990), Director of the NCTE Commission on Composition, states: "The Commission notes and applauds the trend toward teacher-as-writer. Members encourage teachers of writing to write and to publish writing about what takes place in their classrooms."(10)

Robert Shaw (1985) states that change has come about as a result of new directions taken by the academic community. He sees that they have assumed a

> more useful posture toward research on writing instruction in recent years than in the past. The 29 (elementary) composition articles published before 1980 (ERIC database) have since been joined by an additional 31 articles, which are generally more relevant to classroom practice. Collaborative efforts between teachers and researchers have resulted in a number of publications that directly address the needs of classroom teachers. (Calkins, 1980; Graves, 1980; Shaw and others, 1983). Two organizations, the National Writing Project and the Regional Exchange Network, facilitate this collaboration.(18)

A supporter of the theory that change happens at the grass roots level is Lucy McCormick Calkins who noted in 1986:

> Things are changing in the field of writing. Over the past fifteen years, interest in the teaching of writing has soared: throughout the country there are summer institutes, workshops, and in-service courses. Thankfully, the rising interest in writing is accompanied by a growing knowledge base. During these last fifteen years we have had, for the first time, major studies on how children develop as writers. Unlike most educational research, these studies are having a direct and powerful effect on classroom teaching.(13)

An article by Robert Parker (1988) describes a summer institute which had as its primary purpose the engagement of teachers "in critical re-theorizing: critical because the teachers articulate and examine their current personal theories in the light of alternate perspectives, and re-theorizing because this examination, undertaken through open dialogue with others, frequently leads to change and reconstruction in their personal theories."(36)

The link between teachers and their return to the role of learner through institutes, graduate and in-service course work is one that needs further study. Joan Feeley (1988) surveyed four groups of teachers in New Jersey who attended the 1987 Writing Across the Curriculum seminars at William Paterson College. She looked at "what practices are carried over into everyday classroom routines and shared with other teachers well after the coursework has been completed".(3) Feeley found that "(t)hese teachers are making more time for writing in their daily programs and are generally following a process approach."(22)

In their whole language anthology, Manning and Manning (1989)

celebrate the diffusion of theory into classroom practice: "Fortunately, teachers have recaptured their intuition about language learning and their knowledge about student learning continues to be clarified and extended. Through sound scientific research and theory, outstanding educators have shown how students develop as readers and writers."(10)

In their pre/in-service language arts textbook, Carol J. Fisher and C. Ann Terry [1990 (341)] focus directly on one event that changed teaching of writing in elementary schools, as does Ruth Beeker (1981) in her essay:

> That blissful state of complacency. . .was shaken in 1978. The Ford Foundation published a paper on the teaching of writing which it had commissioned Donald Graves to author. What Graves advocated in Balance the Basics: Let Them Write was a radical departure from the accepted pedagogy. Rather than emphasizing the written product, he called for teachers to use a process--conference approach (Graves, 1978). Not since the modern math revolution the 1960s had such a sweeping pedagogical change in an elementary school subject been advocated.(3)

During the course of this investigation, it became clear who the leaders in elementary writing instruction are. References and bibliographies highlight their impact as change agents in the field. Elementary teachers interested in writing/reading instruction read Donald Graves, Kenneth Goodman, Yetta Goodman, Lucy Calkins, Donald Murray, James Moffett, Jane Hansen, Jerome Harste, Marie Clay, Toby Fulwiler, Nancie Atwell, Peter Elbow and Thomas Newkirk. These educators are being read because they write for an audience of classroom teachers, as well as other

researchers.

Changes in elementary writing instruction in the 1980s resulted from several factors: researchers sat shoulder to shoulder with young writers and their teachers. They listened and watched and remembered that practitioners needed to be in their audience when they published their results. Teachers added their voices and credibility to the expanding knowledge base as they wrote for each other in journals and anthologies. Administrators supported their efforts by attending and/or sponsoring in-service courses, summer institutes and workshops.

WHAT CHARACTERIZED WRITING INSTRUCTION IN THE 1980S?

Arthur N. Applebee, Judith A. Langer and Ina V.S. Mullis (1986) conducted a study which examined writing trends between 1974-84 by looking at writing produced by nine, thirteen and seventeen year old students as they responded to several writing tasks. The results, published by Educational Testing Service in 1986, were "disappointing."(54) The study has been quoted in the literature (including pre/in-service language arts textbooks (Donoghue, 1990) and in the popular press.

In an essay published in English Journal (Nov 1990), Ben Nelms responds to the study:

> Students who report greater exposure to writing process instruction appeared to have higher writing proficiency than their peers with more limited exposure, but the difference was not statistically significant. Only 12 percent of the teachers now report no special training in the teaching of writing, and 65 percent say they have increased the amount of time devoted to writing instruction during the past three years. Even so, more than 70 percent reported that they spent an hour a week or less instructing and helping students with their writing?
>
> What does all this mean? Maybe it means that we are not making much headway in improving writing instruction and/or student achievement in writing. Maybe it means that the progress we are making is so gradual that it doesn't show up in the national sample yet. Maybe twenty minutes is still not long enough to assess students' application of what they have learned about writing processes. Maybe the arbitrarily selected topics and the artificiality of the testing activities militate against the students' taking the task seriously.(92)

Donsky's (1983) "chimera" (11) image could be aptly employed when we look at evaluating the teaching of writing. Because it is grafted to accountability, testing has traditionally offered more checks than balances to teachers. If the results are "disappointing", as they usually are, we all feel indicted. After all, the Applebee, Langer and Mullis report is a national study. Teachers need to read this report and ask: How does this report measure what my students are learning? Would I assign these tasks and ask these questions of my students? Are there other ways to evaluate what my students and I know about writing? Just as new tests are now being developed for reading, there is a need to assess the methods and devices being used to evaluate young writers and their products.

The three trends in elementary writing instruction in the 1980s can be described not by looking only at children's writing samples, but at classroom practices as they are described in the literature and in pre/in-service language arts textbooks. These trends are known as writing process, writing across the curriculum or writing in the content areas and whole language or integrated learning. They are not separate or divergent, but interrelated and convergent. An elementary teacher could be practicing theories inherent in all three on any given day, but an informed observer today might use the newest term first to describe the learning behaviors, procedures and materials in that classroom: whole language.

Manning and Manning (1989) articulate the "set of beliefs about language learning" that characterize whole language:

> 1.Reading and writing should be a natural outgrowth of oral language development.
>
> 2.Children construct their own knowledge from within.
>
> 3.Reading is comprehension, that is, creating meaning from text.
>
> 4.Communication is the main aim of writing.
>
> 5.Learning to read and write is a social process.
>
> 6.Risk taking and making mistakes are critical to reading and writing well.(10)

Temple and Gillet (1989) instruct us in the ways of the whole language classroom in their pre/in-service textbook:

> Teachers who share the whole language persuasion believe that speaking, listening, acting, reading, and writing should be taught in an integrated fashion. Hence, they have children listen to a story, act out parts of it, discuss it, make up stories of their own versions of it, write stories of their own, discuss these stories, read each other's stories, and read the original story and other stories by the same author.(26)

Manning and Others (1990) describe a typical whole language classroom. References to activities clearly indicate that whole language has subsumed writing across the curriculum and writing process.

> . . .teachers and students write frequently and for many purposes throughout the school day. Students keep journals to document their learning in subject areas. They write letters to order supplies and obtain information about a topic they are studying. They send invitations and thank-you notes. Every day there is a block of time for writing workshop. During this time everyone writes on self-selected topics of interest. Teacher and student exchange ideas as they work together to develop a text. Through whole-class or small-group minilessons, the teacher provides instruction and confers with individual students about their writing. As students engage in the writing process, they develop their skills and learn about the technical aspects of writing.(33)

Yetta Goodman (1989) acknowledges the writing process connection in her history of whole language when she says that "Don Graves. . .has clearly documented that children learn to write and that their writing continues to develop when they have opportunities to write in a supportive environment. Graves's work was part of a knowledge explosion in the field of composition that has greatly influenced whole language."(119)

Jerome Harste's article (1989) on the future of whole language

focuses on what it has come to mean for many teachers:

> Whole language is fundamentally an attempt to get educators, students, and the public in touch with the basic process of reading, writing, and learning. At one level it is a call to return to the basics. Rather than discuss reading, students read. Rather than talk about writing, students write.(248)

Beeker (1981), Hoskisson and Tompkins (1987), Temple (1989), and Stoodt (1988) describe the writing process as having from three (prewriting, drafting, revision) to five (editing and sharing/publication) non-linear stages, but everyone agrees that daily writing "for real purposes" [Toliver, 1990, (349)] is essential for successful young writers.

Ruth Tschumy (1983) shares her definition of writing across the curriculum in an NASSP Bulletin:

> Simply put, what writing across the curriculum is really about is writing vis-a-vis learning. The core of the movement is the concept that writing is a way of arriving at learning; a way of assisting learning in all subject areas. To relegate writing solely to the English class, or to use writing solely as a means of testing in other classes, is to severely limit its usefulness. . .each of us has had the experience of coming to know what we think by writing it down or talking it through. Facts that the student is encouraged to relate to his own experiences are, by that process of engagement, reformulated and cemented rather than stockpiled on a short term basis. In writing, students can make sense of new information by interpreting it in the light of what they already know. Writing, then is a vehicle for learning."(66)

All content areas, from science (DeMars, 1990), (Peck, 1988), (Espe and Others, 1990) to mathematics (Risk, 1988) are arenas for writing experiences. Collaborative research projects (Jongsma, 1990), "thinking journals" (Risk, 1988), and learning logs (Tschumy, 1983) rescue writing across the curriculum from being "just a response to learning; it enables learning to occur and develop." [Walker, 1987, (251)]

The significance of these three interrelated movements can be described in this parable:

> There once was a group of interested and knowledgeable naturalists (educators) who decided one particularly fine day to go on a whale watch. Each one had studied different aspects of these giants and together they knew quite a lot. Their excitement grew as they anticipated seeing a mighty leviathan firsthand. They boarded the converted fishing boat and headed out to the place

where whales were known to feed.

By and by, the captain a researcher who knew the habits of whales, shut down the engines and they waited quietly, enjoying the sunshine and the calm waters. Suddenly, the people heard and felt the boat being bumped and gently heaved. "It must be a whale," they murmured, careful not to make too much noise lest they upset the animal. One person leaned over the rail and saw a fin. Catching the others' attention, she said: "I can see its fin (writing across the curriculum)."

"A pectoral fin," specified another.

"I call it a flipper," added in a third expert.

Nearly everyone had rushed to the starboard side, but some had stayed back for fear the boat would tip over if even one more person would approach the railing. They would take the others' word for it. Instead, they moved to the port side and were treated straightaway to a view of the whale's head (writing process).

You can probably guess that it wasn't too long before they were joined by the others who were thrilled to see another part of the whale. The whale's head experts happily shared their knowledge with the others.

Before too long, one careful observer thought: "If the fin is over there and the head is over here, then the whale (whole language/integrated learning) must be underneath us and bigger than this boat." Right, again.

After about an hour, during which they observed what the captain said was the best "close to the boat behavior" he had ever witnessed, the group agreed (this was a democratic captain) to head back. The return trip was an important part of the experience because they had a chance to reflect upon what they had learned and think about what they would do next to add to their knowledge of whales.

WHAT WAS THE PLACE OF TEXTBOOKS IN ELEMENTARY WRITING INSTRUCTION IN THE 1980S?

This portion of the investigation focuses on the issue of language arts textbooks. If textbooks have traditionally played a dominant role in influencing classroom practices, then a review of sources that discuss the value and role of student textbooks in the elementary classroom is necessary. Second, a survey of fourteen recently published (1987-1990) pre/in-service language arts textbooks is presented which centers on recognition of the trends in elementary writing instruction in the 1980s. (Table 1)

Elementary Language Arts Textbooks

Compared with the brief shelf life of pre/in-service textbooks, which bear the burden of updating the latest research-based theory to underpin pedagogy, classroom textbooks are a major investment for school systems and see many years of service in public schools. In 1977, Donald Graves (1984) said:

> Ninety-five percent of classroom instruction can be attributed to classroom materials. This is the claim of a new study by the Educational Product Information Exchange Institute, a nonprofit, consumer supported organization. Although I have had a hard time accepting the ninety-five percent figure, the power and place of textbooks in American classrooms cannot be overlooked. For this reason the content and approaches of textbooks ought to be looked at more often.(53)

Jesse Perry (1990), Director of the NCTE Commission on Language, after discussing the effect of statewide textbook adoption on content, also recommends

> careful examination of textbooks. . .in order to differentiate between true and mislabled whole

> language materials. The deception is only exacerbated by the mandating or the wholesale adoption of 'whole language programs' by administrators or school boards at the local, state or provincial levels. The results of such mandates are the trappings of whole language without the understanding of language learning necessary for whole language teachers.(13)

To that end, pre/in-service language arts textbook authors Hoskisson and Tompkins (1987) include a checklist for evaluating language arts texts (Appendix).

In her essay, "How to cover a language arts textbook--sit on it" (1988), Carol Brennan examined her motive for using the fifth grade language arts textbook: "The California Achievement Test was waiting at the end of the year like a stern judge, not of the children's writing but of their knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and usage rules."(274) But she also examined the textbook for its efficacy in teaching writing and found "little evidence of process approaches in what students were being asked to do, even in the composition strand." (275)

In a more formal study, Mary Ellen Giacobbe (1988) looked at ten second and fifth grade 1983 and 1984 language arts textbooks using James Moffett's scale of definitions which "corresponds to an order of increasing difficulty for the writer and for the teacher of writing." (256) The scale includes drawing and handwriting; transcribing and copying; paraphrasing and summarizing; crafting conventional or given subject matter; and revising inner speech-full fledged authorship. Giacobbe shares one of her findings:

> Aside from handwriting and drawing, second graders spend less time on full fledged authoring than any other category. Seven of the ten books offered no opportunities for authoring at all. The average for the ten books is a low 2 percent.(256)

Giacobbe's study updates two language arts textbook surveys Graves (1984) presents from 1977 and 1983. His question was: "How do language arts texts provide for the teaching of writing?" (52) Little change had occurred during the seven years: "The rhetoric of process had been included in some of the textbook introductions but the contents belied their intentions. Textbooks didn't provide any more opportunities to write than they had before. . ."(52)

What then <u>are</u> elementary language arts textbooks used for if they do not help children learn how to write? Observations by Manning and Others (1990) reflect the trend found in many language arts pre/in-service texts (Table 1):

> Many of the whole language teachers we know refer to English textbooks, but they are not driven by them. . .In the writing workshop and in writing activities outside the workshop, students develop the strategies they need in the process of writing, not by preceding in a sequential order through a textbook.(39)

Robert Shaw (1985) conducted a study of ten language arts texts sold between 1966 and 1980 for four grade levels, three through six, and found

> some 4,500 pages of rules, explanations, and exercises that predominantly address skills in grammar and mechanics. . .the final chapter in all ten was the chapter on writing. In addition to the symbolic implications, this position has a real logistical effect as well. Few teachers ever complete an entire textbook in a school year, and those who follow the sequence of chapters rarely reach the last one.(17)

Given the results of these studies, the place of textbooks in *the teaching of writing* should be compared to the auxiliary motor on the sailing ship. The skillful teacher-sailor knows when to employ what techniques, tools or machines to enable each participant to have a successful voyage. Textbooks are used when needed and not as an anchor to keep the crew safely in the harbor doing endless practice drills, but never venturing out to sea.

Pre/In-Service Language Arts Textbooks

Pre/in-service language arts textbooks are aimed at either college elementary education majors participating in methods courses prior to their full semester practice teaching experience or classroom teachers involved in in-service or graduate course work. The assumption is that teachers are the drivers of the writing curriculum, and that these textbooks stand to influence them by presenting information about research-based methods of teaching writing.

To that end, fourteen pre/in-service textbooks were examined (Bromley [1988]; Cox [1988]; DeHaven [1988]; Donoghue [1990]; Ellis, Standal, Pennan and Rummel [1989]; Fisher and Terry [1990]; Hennings [1990]; Hoskisson and Tompkins [1987]; Monson, Taylor and Dykstra [1988]; Norton [1989]; Ross and Roe [1990]; Ruben [1990]; Stoodt [1988]; Temple and Gillet [1989]). Four questions about their content relative to trends in elementary writing instruction were asked:

1. Do the authors offer a process approach as the method of teaching writing?

2. Do the authors advise or suggest limiting reliance on a student language arts text?

3. Do the authors include information about writing across the curriculum or content area writing?

4. Do the authors include information about whole language theory or integrated learning? [Table 1]

If we accept pre/in-service language arts textbooks as an barometer of trends in elementary writing instruction, then the results of this survey indicate that writing process, writing across the curriculum and whole language theory have found their way into sufficient numbers of American classrooms and have changed the way writing is taught. The change has occurred in spite of an apparent lag in student textbooks which continue to promote a skill by skill, sentence by sentence, linear approach to learning how to write.

Conclusion

This look at the palimpsest of elementary writing instruction in the 1980s shows writing process theory being practiced across the curriculum in whole language or integrated learning classrooms. If one considers the trend as it is reflected in the literature, it is more than a passing fancy and more than 'Riting Redux.

What lies ahead? The 90s should be a decade during which we

study our evolution as writers, practitioners and researchers. There is a need to reflect and share our reflections. Reflection will enable us to recognize and evaluate practices that have emerged from theories and connect them to our own experiences. We need to take the time to become Monday morning quarterbacks and experience the involvement and excitement of analyzing our successes and failures as a group of informed professionals. More studies are needed that examine the differences among the translations of writing process theory as practices adjust to populations and settings over time.

Donald Murray's (1989) students wrote commentaries as they developed drafts. In these written reflections, they told themselves

> what worked and what needs work. They also compared their intentions to their accomplishments, explained their working procedures, defined problems and proposed solutions, suggested what they would do next, (and) reported what they had learned and needed to learn. . .(133)

I suggest these present a useful framework as we participate in what are now becoming the trends in elementary writing instruction in the 90s.

TABLE 1

TRENDS IN ELEMENTARY WRITING INSTRUCTION USING PRE/IN-SERVICE LANGUAGE ARTS TEXTBOOKS

N = 14

ITEM	YES	NO
1. Do the authors offer a process approach as the method of teaching writing?	100%	0%
2. Do the authors advise or suggest limiting reliance on a student language arts text?	71%	29%
3. Do the authors include information about writing across the curriculum or content area writing?	85%	15%
4. Do the authors include information about whole language theory or integrated learning?	100%	0%

APPENDIX

Physical Features

_____ Is the textbook attractive, durable, and interesting to students?
_____ Do the size, use of margins, print style, and graphics increase the usability of the textbook?
_____ Do the illustrations enhance interest in the textbook?
_____ What supplemental materials (e.g., teacher's editions, resource books, skill handbooks, computer programs, posters, tests) are included with the textbook?

Conceptual Framework

_____ What is the theoretical orientation of the textbook?
_____ Does the textbook reflect the latest research in how language is learned?
_____ Are the instructional goals of the textbook presented clearly?
_____ How well do these goals mesh with your own views of language arts education?

Content

_____ Does the textbook include lessons on learning language, learning through language, and learning about language, the three components of the language arts curriculum identified by M.A.K. Halliday?
_____ What types of listening, talking, reading, and writing activities are included in the textbook?
_____ How much emphasis is placed on each of the four language modes?
_____ How much emphasis is placed on grammar?
_____ Is quality children's literature included in the textbook?
_____ Is drama included in the textbook?
_____ Are the language and language skill activities appropriate for the grade level at which they are presented?
_____ Are activities provided that require students to use language in genuine ways or do most activities require students to only copy sentences from the textbook or fill in the blanks with letters and words?
_____ Are across the curriculum activities suggested?
_____ Does the textbook invite student involvement?
_____ Does the textbook encourage students to think critically and creatively?

Organization

_____ How is the textbook organized?
_____ Must each lesson or unit be taught in sequence?
_____ Does the scope and sequence chart provide a reasonable organization of language skills?

Adaptability

_____ Is information provided on how to adapt the textbook to meet students' individual needs?
_____ Can the textbook be adapted for gifted students?
_____ Can the textbook be adapted for learning disabled students?
_____ Can the textbook be adapted for speakers of nonstandard English?

Style

_____ Will students like the writing style of the textbook?
_____ Does the textbook avoid stereotypes and stereotypical language?

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